



justice
connect



Annual Report 2014-15

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Prof. Gillian Triggs at the 2015 Human Rights Dinner

OUR YEAR

Justice Connect continued to grow in the 2014-15 financial year. Through our work, many thousands of people received high quality, free legal advice, representation and training who would have otherwise missed out. Hundreds of pro bono lawyers fulfilled their professional obligation to do pro bono work through their partnership with us. And we contributed to improved law and policies across all of the areas of our casework, as we identified, and advocated to change, unfair laws and policies.

Delivering access to justice through pro bono legal services, to people experiencing disadvantage and the community organisations that support them

Across all our programs, we received 7,393 requests for assistance and provided legal advice or a referral to 2,246 people (including community organisations) and training sessions to 2,209 community organisations.

Building, supporting and engaging a strong commitment to lawyers' pro bono responsibility

Our outreach programs – Homeless Law, Seniors Law and MOSAIC - drew on 793 lawyers on their rosters. Likewise, 452 lawyers and 258 barristers assisted with referrals, trainings, or discrete advice in our Self Representation Service, Referral Service and Not-for-Profit Law. In all, we estimate that Justice Connect unlocked over 31,000 hours of pro bono legal work. We provided support and guidance to all these lawyers, including providing specialist training to 544 lawyers.

Challenging and changing unjust and unfair laws and policies, using evidence from our casework and the stories of our clients

Highlights include a landmark decision in the Victorian Supreme Court on housing and human rights, run for Homeless Law by Clayton Utz and counsel.

We also contributed to many government inquiries. Both Homeless Law and Seniors Law made lengthy submissions to the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, highlighting the links between family violence and homelessness and raising elder abuse as a family violence issue. The Self-Representation Service submitted to the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into the Industrial Relations Framework, noting the specific challenges faced by people who are unfairly dismissed and are unrepresented. Not-for-Profit Law made submissions to various inquiries and consultations, including to the Federal Parliamentary Inquiry into the Register of Environmental Organisations and to the Commonwealth Department of Treasury's "Re:think Tax Discussion Paper".

It's been another strong year for Justice Connect in our fundraising. We were delighted to receive new or continuing funding from a range of philanthropic trusts and foundations, including Perpetual Trustees, Equity Trustees, Portland House Foundation and Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation. The Victorian Government continued to support our Not-for-profit Law and Homeless Law work, and the federal Attorney General's four year funding commitment enabled the launch of our new Self-Representation Service. We finished the year with total income of \$4,821,786 and a surplus of \$67,579. We've been able to use these funds to consolidate and expand existing programs and start new ones. We also finalised the lease on new premises for our Sydney office, in a shared tenancy with our colleagues at the Public Interest Advocacy Centre.

The year ahead

Key focus areas for the year ahead include:

- » Expanding our successful health justice partnership model for responding to elder abuse in Victoria and NSW
- » Rolling out the Not-for-Profit Law InfoHub nationally
- » Expanding the reach of our MOSAIC serviced

for newly arrived migrants, by increasing our outreach locations

- » Securing the Women's Homelessness Prevention Project and Debt and Tenancy Legal Help for Prisoners Project as ongoing parts of our Homeless Law service
- » Increasing the reach of our Federal Court/Federal Circuit Court Self-Representation Service by expanding the areas of law the service assists in
- » Expanding the dedicated referral pathways for employment law assistance and collaborating in the response to Temporary Protection Visa asylum seekers in Victoria and NSW
- » Auspicing the establishment of the National Centre for Health Justice Partnerships
- » Finalising our Reconciliation Action Plan

Thank you

Our members are at the core of everything we do – through accepting referrals, staffing outreach programs, attending and hosting events, and providing financial and in-kind support. We are grateful for our

members' continued willingness to partner with Justice Connect and to support our vision.

In particular, we appreciate the support of our longstanding key partners, which include the Law Institute of Victoria, the Victorian Bar, NSW and Victoria Legal Aid and our member law firms, corporate legal departments, community legal centres and university law schools.

We're also thankful for the support from the philanthropic sector and government and from barristers at the Bars in Victoria and NSW.

Our volunteer board members and committee members have again provided wise counsel and support, and our staff continue to be inspiring and enthusiastic contributors.

Our thanks to them all. We look forward to continuing to work with you towards our shared vision of a fair and just world.



Mitzi Gilligan, President

Fiona McLeay, Chief Executive Officer



7,393
people helped



31,197
pro bono hours
leveraged



585
referrals made



1,661
advices given



2,219 clients
trained



1,230 lawyers
engaged



544
lawyers trained

REFERRAL SERVICE



Pro bono should be a part
of all lawyers' practice
– Pro Bono Barrister

Our Referral Service provides access to justice through pro bono by linking people experiencing disadvantage and the community organisations that support them with lawyers who will assist for free.

The Service administers the pro bono programs of the Victorian bar and the Law Institute of Victoria, and is uniquely placed to access a large pool of lawyers across Victoria and NSW.

How are we delivering access to justice through pro bono?

This year has been one of promising growth and development, beginning with a strategy to improve our request to referral ratio. In FY15 we received and assessed 1,858 requests for assistance in all areas of law across Victoria and NSW, and facilitated 396 referrals to pro bono lawyers.

This year Referral Service has:

- Received and assessed 1,858 requests for assistance across all areas of law
- Facilitated 396 referrals to pro bono lawyers
- Redeveloped website content accessible by individuals as well as a page dedicated to community lawyers
- Commenced direct engagement with community legal centres and Legal Aid
- Appointed a Referral Lawyer in Sydney in October 2014
- Continued to engage lawyers with pro bono opportunities
- Made a successful submission to the Family Law Review which advocated for a return to VLA funding hearings for clients who otherwise qualified for assistance

Driven by the findings of an evaluation of our program in 2014, we have worked hard to improve the clarity of the information available to individuals seeking assistance from our service by improving the information available on the website. In recognition of the important role of community legal centres as a pathway to our Service we created a new web page dedicated to community lawyers. These improvements were designed to reduce the number of requests we receive from individuals in areas of law, such as family law, that are difficult for us to refer to pro bono assistance and to increase referrals from community lawyers.

Coupled with website information, we also commenced direct engagement with community legal centres and Legal Aid in Victoria and NSW to raise awareness about our service and how we can assist centres to deliver access to justice for their clients. The appointment of a Referral Lawyer in Sydney in October 2014, allowed us to increase our active engagement with the legal assistance sector in NSW.

How are we building lawyers' commitment to their pro bono responsibilities?

Our Referral Service offers pro bono lawyers the opportunity to assist individuals who would not otherwise be able to access legal services, with a variety of legal matters. A huge draw of the Service is that the work offers a contrast with ordinary private practice: from assisting in tenancy, infringements, credit and debt, coronial inquest, to immigration law. Many lawyers have jumped at the chance to make an immediate, tangible difference in their clients' lives. The comments of one lawyer demonstrate the impact of the

work of the Referral Service, on clients and on pro bono lawyers:

“...this was a unique case which concerned an area of law that we do not deal with very often but which we may see a lot more of in the future with regards to gender dysphoria. It was therefore a great learning experience and great to be involved in aspects of family law that we don't deal with on an everyday basis. Sam's family were lovely and deserving and we felt that we were really able to make a significant difference in their lives. Knowing the impact that the decision had on the child and the parents made it truly worthwhile.”

How are we challenging and changing unfair laws and policies?

Our major contribution this year has been to the Family Law Review, conducted by Victoria Legal Aid. We made a submission advocating for a return to VLA funding hearings for clients who otherwise qualified for assistance.

In 2013, VLA guideline changes meant that many individuals no longer qualified for representation at the hearing of their matter.

As a result, the Service saw a significant increase in requests for pro bono assistance. Pro bono assistance in family law matters is very limited, and consequently, many people appeared unrepresented at the hearing of their matter. We are pleased that the Review accepted the recommendation that individuals who otherwise qualified for VLA assistance would be assisted at the hearing of their matter.



It was a pleasure to be able to assist [the client], who found himself in a very stressful and costly situation through no fault of his own. Being heard when there were many other parties, each represented by very senior members of counsel, my client had been effectively sidelined, despite the matter involving very serious consequences for him

- Pro Bono Barrister

OUR CLIENTS

At the Austin Hospital in March 2008, Freddy Williamson wasn't in his hospital bed in the Secure Extended Unit. Diagnosed with schizophrenia at 18, Freddy had entered the public psychiatric system in 1976 when he was 21 and had never left it.

When his parents came to visit – as they did, daily – Freddy had not been seen for 90 minutes. He had a habit of wandering, and so a search begun.

Freddy's body was found in another patient's room. He was dead, lying in a pool of blood with a plastic bag over his head and a face cloth stuffed in his mouth. He was 53 years old.

Police found there were 'no suspicious circumstances' surrounding his death. Freddy's parents didn't believe a body in that state was not suspicious, and sought a coronial inquest, asking Justice Connect to find representation for them. The Referral Service found pro bono law firms and Counsel to take the matter on.

The Coroner found that Freddy died as a result of asphyxia; his injuries were sustained at the hands of an unknown person, and that the police investigation was inadequate

Sadly, Freddy's father passed away on 24 December 2011, before the Coroner's findings were handed down in August 2014. Freddy's mother continued to instruct the pro bono lawyers.

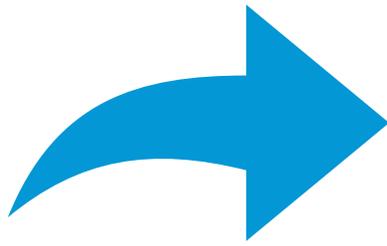
She was very grateful for the pro bono assistance, saying "I don't know what we would have done without them."

John Fogarty, Senior Associate at Corrs Chambers Westgarth, said that "it was very satisfying to be involved in a matter which resulted in an injustice being righted". He was honoured to act for a family who conducted themselves with "great dignity throughout the Coronial process and in the face of that injustice".

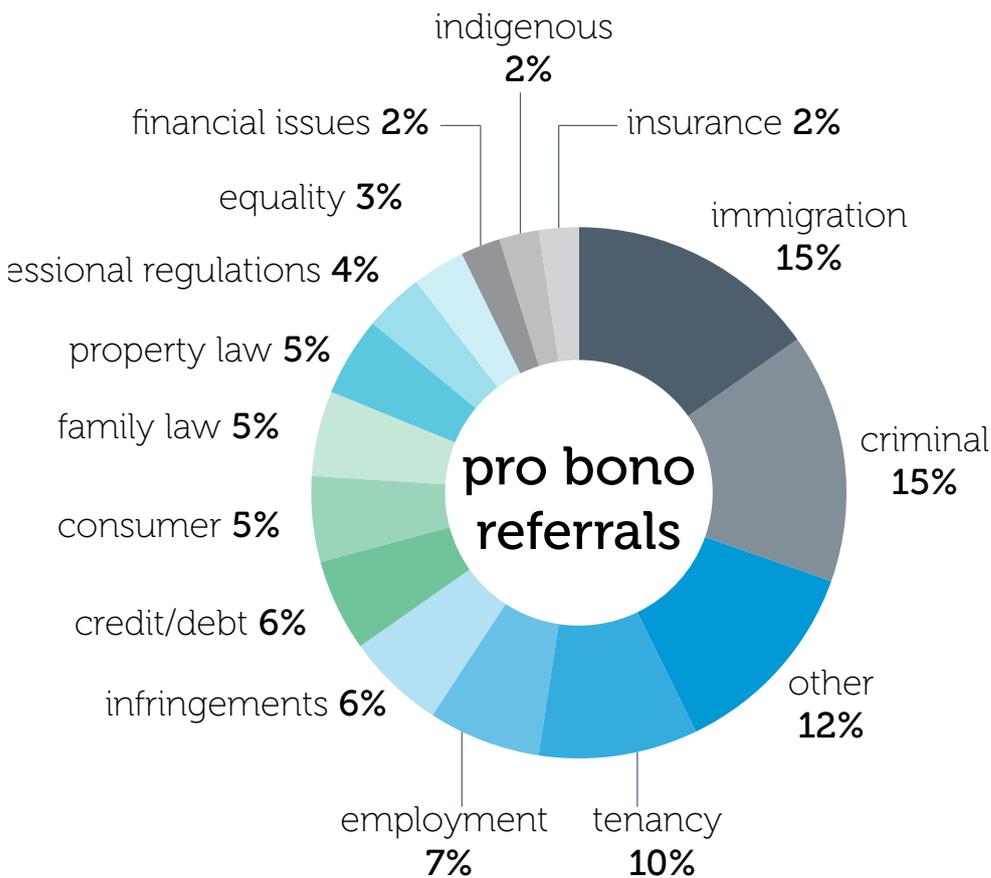
Sarah Thomas of Counsel found great satisfaction with "knowing that the family were professionally and properly represented and that their views were heard". And especially so given that the family did not have the means to pay for representation.

The pro bono representation, and the expertise and resources that came with it, made a tangible difference to the outcome of the inquest. An injustice was righted and Freddy's parents were given closure on the death of their son.





396
referrals made



This experience is rewarding and the benefits of assisting someone who truly values your help is something I highly encourage other lawyers in my firm to involve themselves.
- Pro bono lawyer

SELF REPRESENTATION SERVICE

Justice Connect's newest service, the Self Representation Service, provides legal assistance to people experiencing disadvantage who cannot access legal representation in the Federal Court and Federal Circuit Court.

The Service currently assists with bankruptcy, Fair Work, human rights, discrimination and judicial review matters in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania, and the ACT. Unrepresented litigants are provided with discrete task-focused assistance through appointments with pro bono lawyers, empowering the litigants to conduct their own matters, helping them resolve their legal issues and reducing anxiety and stress usually involved in being unrepresented in litigation.

This year the Self Representation Service has:

- Provided 263 appointments, comprising 141 for NSW and ACT clients, and 122 for Victorian and Tasmanian clients
- Provided 70 immediate advices
- Assisted 225 unrepresented litigants with legal advice
- Provided 133 other individuals with legal information

How are we delivering access to justice through pro bono?

The law and legal processes in Fair Work, bankruptcy, human rights, discrimination and judicial review matters can be complex and confusing, and unrepresented individuals often struggle to be able to properly conduct their proceedings. We ensure that through the contribution of pro bono lawyers, unrepresented litigants have information on court processes, legal advice on how to conduct their case, and legal assistance in completing court forms and documents. With this assistance, unrepresented people can be empowered to overcome the hurdles in resolving their matters.

In our first year, with the help of our invaluable pro bono lawyers, the Service has received 619 enquiries for assistance and provided advice on 333 occasions, assisting 225 people with legal advice.

In addition, the Service has provided general legal information and referrals to 133 other individuals who came in contact with the Service. We have engaged closely with other Justice Connect programs and the wider community sector to make referrals for 200 people when the Service encountered an individual with non-legal needs, or legal need beyond the scope of the Service.

Looking to the coming year, the Service plans to expand this scope to include assistance in additional areas of law.

How are we building lawyers' commitment to their pro bono responsibilities?

The Self Representation Service is able to reach a substantial number of unrepresented litigants through the participation of engaged and trained pro bono lawyers. The Self Representation Service, being a discrete task-oriented service, allows pro bono lawyers to

experience a different, innovative way of engaging in legal practice. 99 lawyers have received training on client skills and specific areas of law through 10 training sessions facilitated by the Self Representation Service and 67 pro bono lawyers from 11 law firms in NSW and Victoria have provided appointments for unrepresented litigants in the Federal Court and Federal Circuit Court in the past financial year.

All of these lawyers have received training from the Service, on topics such as bankruptcy and Fair Work law, as well as engaging with clients experiencing disadvantage and working with interpreters. Participation in the Service allows the pro bono lawyers to engage with different practice areas and types of clients to which they would normally be exposed, facilitating their ongoing professional development and legal practise skills.

How are we challenging and changing unfair laws and policies?

The Service contributed to law reform for the first time in March, making a submission to the Productivity Commission's inquiry into the Workplace Relations Framework. The submission was based on the Service's early involvement in assisting people experiencing disadvantage to navigate court processes in respect of Fair Work claims.

In the submission, we made the case that there were elements of the Fair Work regime that were inhibitive to unrepresented litigants having their matters heard, from the time limitations placed on applicants to submit general protection claims involving dismissal, to encouraging greater availability of legal assistance in Fair Work claims. These changes, if implemented, will improve outcomes for both unrepresented litigants and the courts who hear their matters.

OUR CLIENTS

Single mother of son with a disability and a flooding home avoids going bankrupt

In 2009, Jessica* purchased a unit which had a history of flooding, but was assured that the problem had been solved and it would be a safe, nurturing place to raise her son, who has a disability. Initially, this was true, and Jessica and her son settled into their new surroundings.

Then, the flooding came. Twice. Both times, the flooding was because earlier problems with the building had in fact not been fixed, including a flooding bathroom in an upstairs apartment.

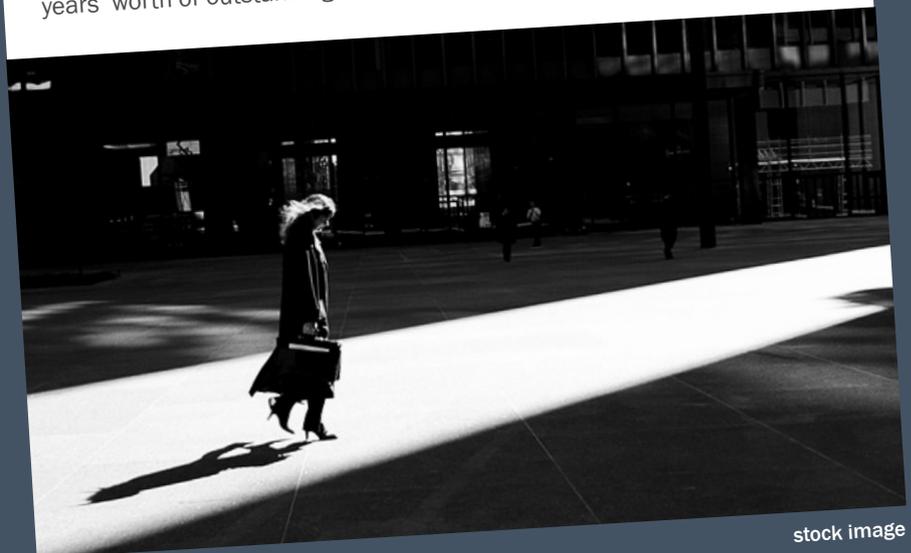
This meant that Jessica twice had to replace the carpet and floorboards, at great personal expense. She informed the body corporate group that she would not be paying her fees. Jessica and the body corporate made an informal arrangement wherein Jessica would not pay her body corporate fees in exchange for her performing maintenance around the common property.

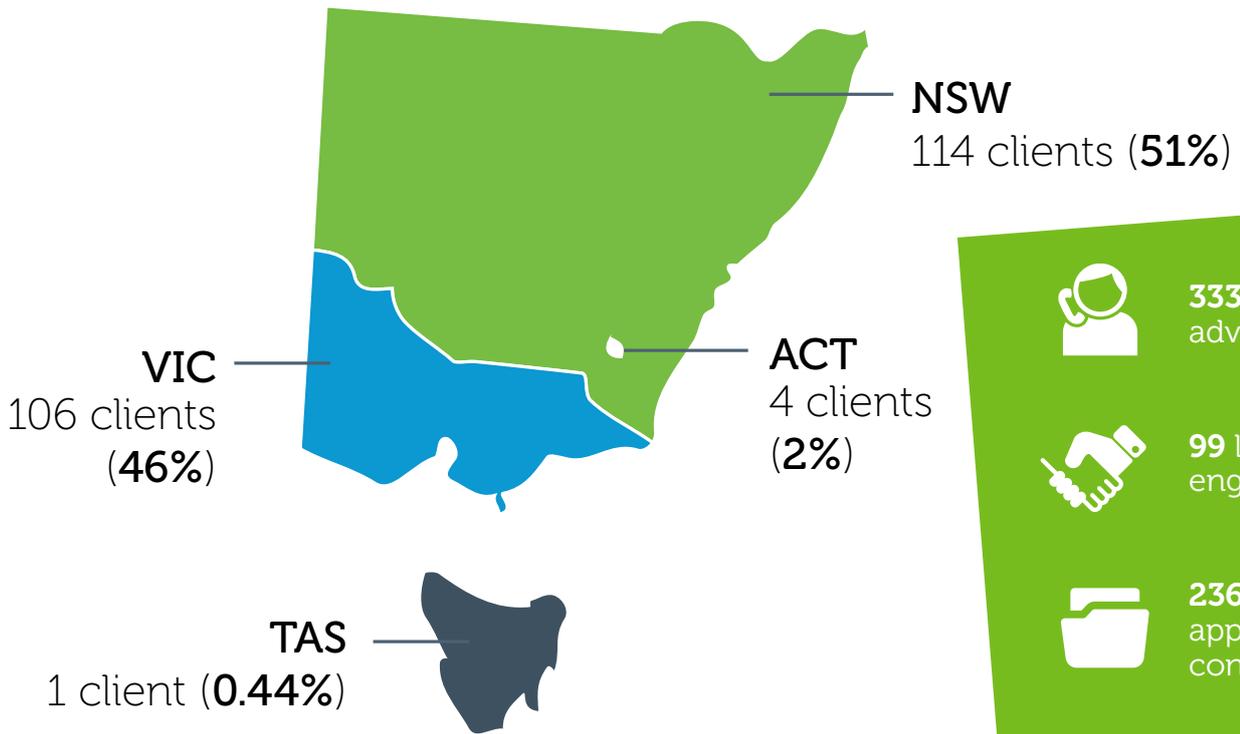
In May 2015, everything changed. All of a sudden she was being asked by the body corporate to pay years' worth of outstanding fees

and attend a court hearing. She had not received any documents prior to this notification – it was a total surprise.

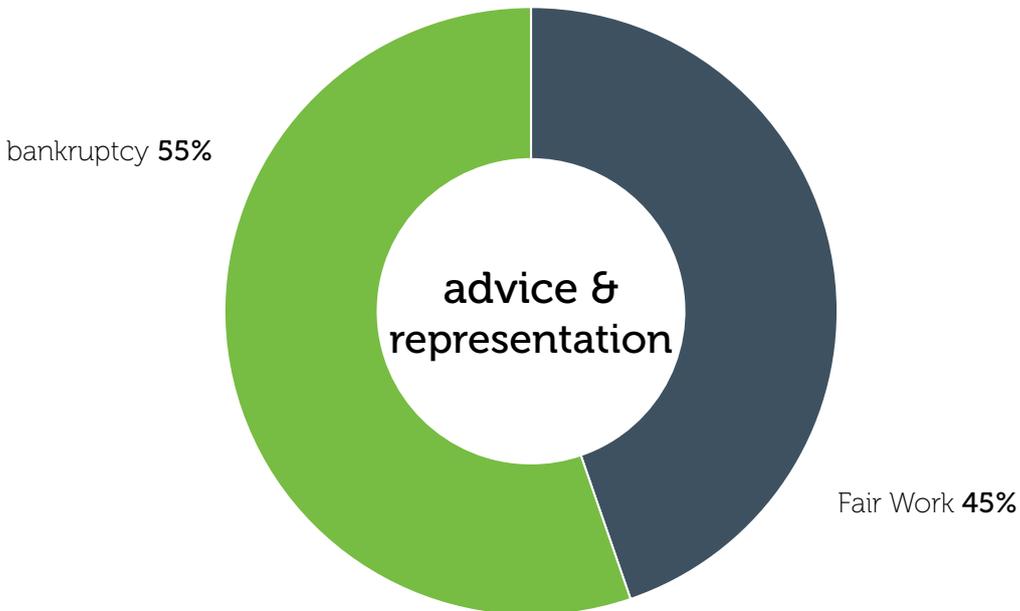
Jessica came to the Self Representation Service on the day of her first creditor's petition hearing. After successfully requesting an adjournment, she attended an appointment with the Service to understand her options in opposing the creditor's petition and the consequences of bankruptcy. In her appointment, the pro bono lawyer outlined all of the options available to her in avoiding bankruptcy as well as challenging the underlying debt. After the appointment, Jessica decided to avoid bankruptcy by paying the debt to the creditor which also included a bill for legal costs. The matter was dismissed shortly thereafter and Jessica was able to avoid bankruptcy.

"I don't know what I would have done without you – I seriously would have had a nervous breakdown," she said afterwards. Today, Jessica has entered into a new payment plan with the body corporate, and has been able to stay at home in her – now flood free – apartment.





-  **333** advices given
-  **99** lawyers engaged
-  **236** appointments conducted
-  **200** legal and non-legal referrals made



HOMELESS LAW



Thank you for coordinating such a great program and enabling commercial lawyers to dedicate time and experience to the program.

- Homeless Law
Pro Bono Lawyer

Homeless Law is Justice Connect's specialist service providing legal and non-legal help to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Working with over 400 pro bono lawyers from our eight member firms, along with our in-house social workers, Homeless Law provides holistic support to hundreds of clients while engaging in evidence-based advocacy to change laws which cause or perpetuate homelessness.

This year Homeless Law has:

- Provided legal representation to 446 clients who were homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Provided direct social work support to 135 clients
- Prevented the eviction of 139 clients and their families
- Set up and successfully run innovative new projects, the Women's Homelessness Prevention Project and the Debt and Tenancy Legal Help for Prisoners Project
- Established a second co-location of a Homeless Law staff member at Launch Housing in St Kilda
- Extended our service and relationships in Geelong, including through an event, Homelessness in Geelong: legal and non-legal collaboration
- Provided leadership in relation to integrated services through our two in-house social workers
- Won a landmark case on housing and human rights, *Burgess v Director of Housing*
- Led conversations on the criminalisation of homelessness, including through the Justice Access Advisory Group
- Contributed substantial evidence in detailed submissions to two major enquiries, the eight-year review of Victoria's Human Rights Charter and the Royal Commission into Family Violence, both heavily informed by our casework

How are we delivering access to justice through pro bono?

With our partner pro bono lawyers, we provided ongoing legal representation to 446 clients, including successfully preventing the evictions of 139 clients and their families. We also provided direct social work support to 135 clients.

Our two new programs aimed at groups with considerable unmet legal need continued their good work this year. The Women's Homelessness Prevention Project (WHPP), funded by the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation and supported by the City of Melbourne and Herbert Smith Freehills, aims to stop women's homelessness before it happens, through an innovative combination of legal representation and social work support. Through it, we provided legal representation and intensive social work support to 62 women at risk of homelessness. Eighty-one per cent of finalised matters have resulted in women maintaining safe housing or resolving a tenancy legal issue (e.g. a housing debt) that was a barrier to accessing safe housing.

Likewise, our Debt and Tenancy Legal Help for Prisoners Project, funded by the Ian Potter Foundation and supported by Corrs Chambers Westgarth and G4S, aims to stop the revolving door between homelessness and imprisonment. This year we represented 84 Victorian prisoners, including 53 through appointments at Port Phillip Prison, facing fines, debts and possible eviction. This work prevented the eviction of 20 former prisoners and avoided their release into homelessness.

In addition to improving outcomes for hundreds of individual clients, the work of our pro bono lawyers has informed Homeless Law's strategic law reform work and we have continued to build our influence and impact in relation to eviction prevention, family violence and homelessness, criminalisation of homelessness and the role of integrated legal and social work services in homelessness prevention and access to justice.

How are we building lawyers' commitment to their pro bono responsibilities?

This year Homeless Law has dedicated new ideas and energy to providing high quality support and training to approximately 400 pro bono lawyers. Between our four in-house lawyers and two social workers, we have delivered 35 hours of training in Melbourne and Geelong.

In response to our 2014 Pro Bono Lawyer Survey, Homeless Law designed and delivered two new training modules: Advanced Interview Techniques and Client Skills (including tailored, targeted training videos) and Advanced Tenancy and Tribunal Advocacy (with Elizabeth Bennett of counsel). In April 2015, we carried out the third Annual Pro Bono Lawyer Survey, which was completed by 143 pro bono lawyers. The feedback from these surveys is vital in continuously improving our ability to support lawyers giving back through pro bono.

How are we challenging and changing unfair laws and policies?

We have been active in several fields of law reform this year.

Leading conversations on housing, homelessness and human rights:

Homeless Law took a lead role this year in drawing a clear link between housing and human rights. In June 2015 we made a detailed submission to the eight year review of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic), [Charting a Stronger Course](#).

In December, the Supreme Court of Victoria handed down a landmark decision on housing and human rights [Burgess & Anor v Director of Housing & Anor](#), which was run for Homeless Law by Clayton Utz and Christine Melis and Daniel Aghion of counsel. We followed this by convening a panel event on the decision, attended by over 100 representatives from the housing, homelessness, government and legal sectors. We also co-ordinated the

"We were alerted to concerns expressed by Justice Connect, the homeless law service, about the video link fees that people have to pay if [they] are in prison." – Greens MP Colleen Hartland, moving the amendment

"Ms Adams said it was harder for authorities to make good decisions on how best to help homeless people when being bombarded with complaints about them. But she is confident that the council would continue to work responsibly with homelessness services, rather than responding with a 'knee jerk reaction'".
– Homeless Law featured in *The Age*

housing and homelessness section of the joint NGO submission to the United Nations' Universal Periodic Review into Australia's human rights performance.

Strategic advocacy on family violence and eviction prevention: The insights gleaned from the WHPP informed [Home Safe](#), a submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence, and the co-ordination of [a joint submission endorsed by 128 other organisations](#). The WHPP and its outcomes and findings have featured across multiple media and events, from [The Age](#) and [3RRR](#) to the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation's [Inspiring Philanthropy](#) event and [Melbourne Vital Signs 2014](#), and was a finalist in the [2014 Victorian Health Promotion Foundation Awards](#).

Increasing awareness of civil legal issues and homelessness prevention for Victorian prisoners: A [detailed six-month report](#) on the Debt and Tenancy Legal Help for Prisoners Project was published and [featured on 3RRR](#). Informed by the Project's work, Homeless Law recommended legislative reform to allow video link fees to be waived so prisoners are not prevented from participating in their hearings by the \$82.50 video link fee. This amendment was made by the *Justice Legislation Amendment Act 2015 (Vic)*, which was passed in May 2015.

Leading work on infringements, policing, public space and homelessness: Homeless Law convenes the Justice Access Advisory Group (JAAG), a multidisciplinary group of experts that agreed to work toward re-activating the Homelessness and Public Places Protocol, with the aim of avoiding unnecessary contact between enforcement agencies and people experiencing homelessness and providing support for officers to make decisions other than fining or charging people for conduct directly related to homelessness.

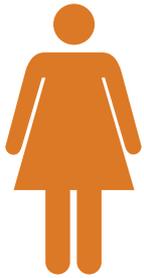
We also led The Federation of Community Legal Centres' Infringements Working Group, participated in the Victoria Police Mental Health Advisory Group and guided the City of Melbourne on a project working with local business and people experiencing homelessness, all aimed at reducing the discriminatory and disproportionate impact of laws regulating public space on people experiencing homelessness.



71% of clients with tenancy problems were facing eviction into homelessness



Turn to **page 30** to read the story of how our Women's Homelessness Prevention Project helped a woman facing homelessness and family violence



58 clients

assisted by the Women's Homelessness Prevention Project



53 clients

assisted by the Debt and Tenancy Legal Help for Prisoners Pilot Project (Port Phillip Prison)



446 casework files



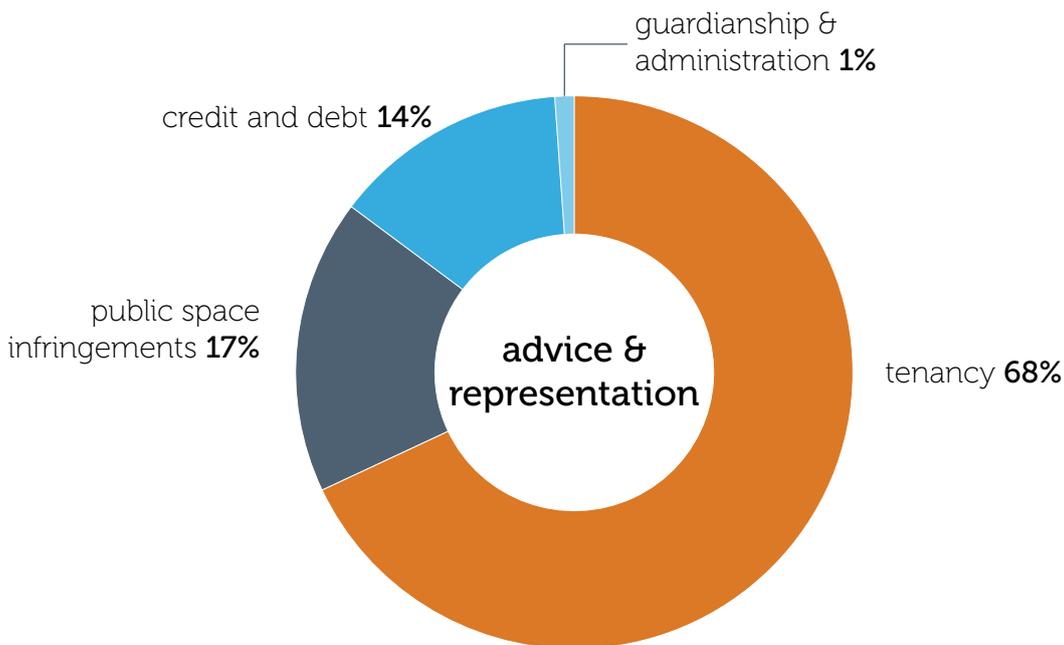
400 lawyers engaged



218 lawyers trained



135 people received non-legal help



SENIORS LAW

Justice Connect's Seniors Law service provides a dedicated focus on legal issues affecting vulnerable older Victorians, and is moving to an innovative new model to do so.

Our service assists older people who are at risk of exploitation, including by their own family, and raises awareness of these issues through extensive stakeholder engagement, particularly with health and community workers. This year marked a profound shift in Seniors Law's approach to improving access to justice, as we adopted the Health Justice Partnership model – aiming to provide access to justice and better health outcomes for people experiencing disadvantage.

This year Seniors Law has:

- Two new programs implemented – the Health Justice Partnership model and Lawyer on a Bus
- New *Powers of Attorney Act 2014* following long-running policy reform efforts
- A submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence
- Training provided for 71 pro bono lawyers
- Early signs that we are reaching the right clients earlier through the cohealth Health Justice Partnership

How are we delivering access to justice through pro bono?

In 2014 we undertook a review of the Seniors Law model. The review highlighted the need for a stronger, ongoing presence within the healthcare sector to reach older people most at risk of elder abuse, and that this was best achieved through a partnership with a health or community agency.

This led to a successful joint Seniors Law and cohealth grant application to the Victorian Legal Services Board for funding for three years to establish a Health Justice Partnership (HJP) in Footscray. Since the inception of the project, we have already seen signs that we are reaching clients earlier and identifying more clients experiencing different types of abuse.

Due to the early indicators of success with cohealth, we are also working with Seniors Rights Victoria to change the Seniors Law model from clinic-based to the new HJP model. As a result, we are negotiating with potential partners regarding the establishment of a second HJP. The Seniors Law model formally changed to the integrated model at the end of June 2015.

During the year, we also delivered the Lawyer in a Bus project, which saw Seniors Law pro bono lawyers visit aged care facilities across Melbourne. The project lawyer visited the facility prior to the clinic to present to staff and residents who were able to make a booking at the clinic. We had a positive response from both staff and residents across facilities, with people generally very happy to know Seniors Law is there to help. The project was completed in August 2015.

How are we building lawyers' commitment to their pro bono responsibilities?

The central pillar of our work in supporting our pro bono lawyers' commitment to helping people experiencing disadvantage is via our training program. During the year, we conducted six sessions, training 71 attendees in areas of law such as guardianship and administration,

probate and wills, property law, and others that are pertinent in providing legal help to older people experiencing disadvantage.

Our Lawyer in a Bus program was also a key plank in our efforts to engage our pro bono lawyers. Bringing the lawyers into our clients' homes provides greater insight into their lives and an opportunity to view the legal system from a different perspective, reinforcing the importance of the work our pro bono lawyers perform.

We also maintained our regular update to our team of pro bono lawyers, keeping them informed as to the latest developments around the law affecting older people.

We also collaborated on and co-presented a paper at the 3rd National Elder Abuse Conference in Perth in September 2014. The paper was authored by Lauren Adamson & Faith Hawthorne from Seniors Law, Jo Renkin from Lander & Rogers and Jenny Blakey and Carol Stuart from Seniors Rights Victoria, and presented by Lauren and Jenny. Participants were asked to consider how to empower and protect older people experiencing, or at risk of, elder abuse. The paper was very well received, and was reported on in the West Australian newspaper.

How are we challenging and changing unfair laws and policies?

It was a busy, rewarding year for our work in policy reform. After a number of years of advocating for changes to Victoria's laws governing substitute decision making, the *Powers of Attorney Act 2014* received royal assent in August 2014.

This new Act consolidates legislative provisions for powers of attorney and introduces a new role of 'supportive attorney'. The new Act also includes more robust enforcement mechanisms, including the creation of new offences where an attorney dishonestly obtains, revokes or uses a power of attorney to gain a financial advantage for themselves or cause a loss to the principal. These are common elements

OUR CLIENTS

He's an RSL life member. He played footy for West Coburg for fifty years, still serving the club today (he even won a league best and fairest back in his prime), and wears the badges he earned with pride on his well-worn lapels. His gold wedding anniversary to Carole was just around the corner. He was the kind of man who, well into his sixties, had chased and apprehended a thief trying to pinch money from the footy club.

And all Paul 'Sul' Sully, 77, was asking for was a handrail at the steps to his family home. A rail to which he was entitled as a pensioner in his local City of Banyule. Carole had already experienced three falls, and he was concerned it could happen again.

He certainly didn't expect to find himself in court over a hand-rail.

The council told Sul that his free rail would involve waiting for "two or three years". Instead, he arranged for a company to do the work for \$668. They agreed he would not have to make full payment until seven days after a tax invoice had been received.

When the tradesman arrived he seemed far more interested in collecting payment than building a rail. There was no tax invoice, he

insisted on up-front payment and suggested that work would not begin for three weeks. Sul tried to negotiate, but given his concerns for Carole's safety, he reluctantly handed over a cheque.

A few days later, Sul cancelled the installation and the cheque, deciding he had been unwise in paying upfront when he had previously agreed otherwise.

But two months on, he received a summons stating that he had paid with a dishonoured cheque and now owed the full payment.

Sul, being Sul, chose to fight. But he didn't have the money to tackle the justice system alone. Thankfully, his daughter contacted Justice Connect Seniors Law.

With the generous pro bono work of lawyers Anastasia Smietanka at Lander & Rogers and Victoria Blidman at the Victorian Bar, Justice Connect was able to help Sul take his case to court.

The court held Sul did not have to pay up front. "We absolutely slaughtered him on his paperwork," said Sul.

"We cannot thank Justice Connect enough."

He is still waiting on his rail.

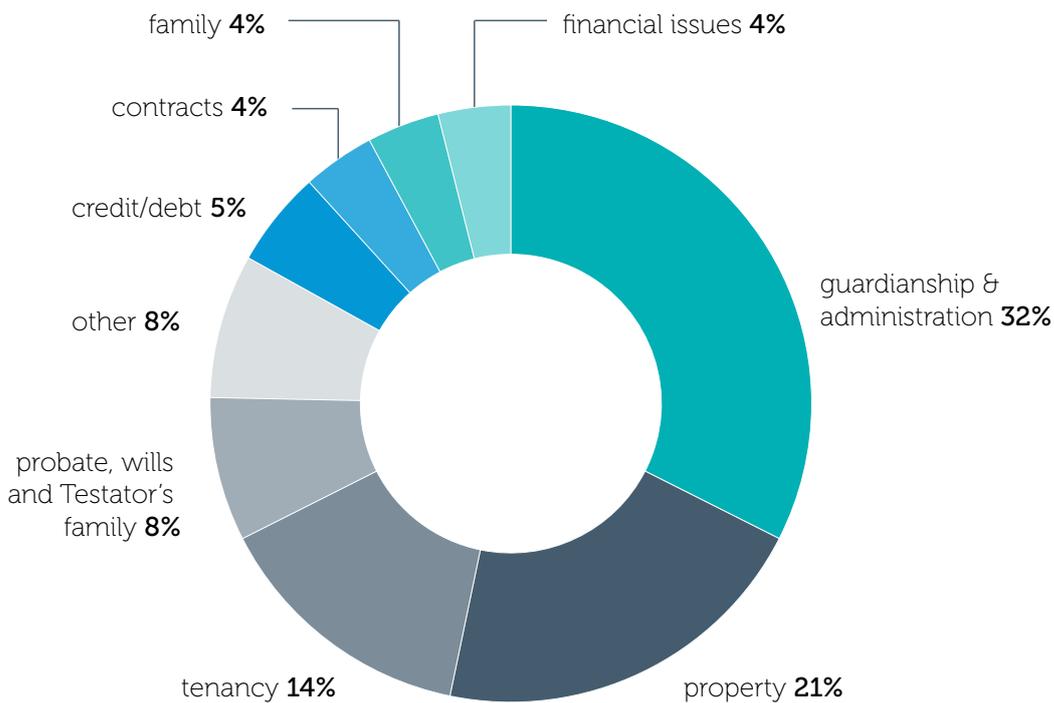


in financial abuse of older people, and the new law provides stronger protection for them. In particular, we welcome the introduction of supportive attorneys as a less restrictive option to assist people with decision-making.

Similarly, the Australian Law Reform Commission’s final report into Equality, Capacity and Disability in Commonwealth Laws recommended a shift away from substitute decision-making towards supported decision-making with appropriate safeguards as recommended in a submission made by Seniors Law. It also recommended a greater emphasis on a person’s “will and preferences” and “wellbeing”, rather than their “best interests”, and the development of a national approach to regulating restrictive practices, particularly in aged care.

Seniors Law also made a submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence, focussing on our work with the health and community sector. We highlighted the fact that elder abuse perpetrated by family members, including financial abuse, is a form of family violence. This submission was covered in The Age newspaper.

Elsewhere, Seniors Law has been working with the Supreme Court and other key stakeholders to review Order 15 of the Supreme Court Rules regarding litigation guardians, and is continuing to work with Housing for the Aged Action Group and the Consumer Action Law Centre on a review of the Retirement Villages Act.



77
casework files



80
lawyers engaged



71
lawyers trained

MOSAIC

MOSAIC is Justice Connect's migrant outreach service, providing free legal help to new migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in NSW.

In a year where we doubled our expected number of clients assisted, almost doubled our team of pro bono lawyers from member firms, and opened new outreach services, MOSAIC continued its impressive rate of growth.

With increasing reach comes increasing effectiveness. At our outreach services – where we provide advice on a range of legal issues including infringements, debt, tenancy, insurance, and employment – clients received initial advice about their legal matters, and a significant number subsequently received ongoing assistance from our lawyers to resolve their disputes.

This year MOSAIC has:

- Provided 297 advices to 204 clients - more than double projections
- Ran the inaugural 'Bring Your Bills' Day to educate new migrants about the pitfalls of phone contracts
- Developed educational videos on contracts for new migrants in three languages – Bengali, Tamil and Arabic
- Ran nine successful training sessions for lawyers in how to interact with new migrant clients

How are delivering access to justice through pro bono?

This year, MOSAIC's capacity to deliver access to justice to our clients increased substantially, with the opening in November of a second outreach service in Sydney CBD in partnership with Australian Red Cross, and plans established for the opening of a third service in Auburn. In total we provided advice to 204 clients this year, more than double our projected number, and opened 144 files to provide ongoing assistance.

Pro bono lawyers are integral to our service provision. The number of lawyers participating in the program by the year's end was 70, up from 45 at the end of the previous financial year. This represents a huge increase in MOSAIC's capacity to provide legal assistance to our client group.

We provided training to 58 community workers throughout the year on civil law issues, and embarked on several innovative projects to increase awareness amongst communities about particular legal issues, including the production of videos in different languages about mobile phone contracts.

The experience we have gained over two short years in understanding our clients' needs is proving invaluable. The prevalence of new migrants who find themselves locked into phone contracts they do not understand is high among our client group, and we and our pro bono lawyers are rapidly gaining proficiency in this specific area of law. It also led to our 'Bring Your Bills' day, where we asked clients to come to a central location where they could receive on-the-spot advice and assistance to resolve mobile phone disputes.

How are we building lawyers' commitment to their pro bono responsibilities?

The number of pro bono lawyers involved in MOSAIC increased this year, reflecting our expanded services and the growing interest in MOSAIC's work among lawyers at our partner firms. We encouraged our lawyers' participation

by providing training to them throughout the year, both on substantive legal topics such as tenancy and consumer law, as well as skills-based topics such as working with interpreters. In total we provided nine different training sessions, attended by 87 lawyers. This past year also saw the introduction of our quarterly lawyer newsletter, and a social event in March to allow our lawyers from different firms an opportunity to meet and get to know one another. We also conducted a survey in early 2015 to assess our lawyers' satisfaction with the MOSAIC program, from which we gained strong positive feedback, as well as valuable insights into our lawyers' needs which will enable us to continue to support their efforts to meet their pro bono responsibilities.

As ever, we were impressed by our lawyers' generous level of commitment to our clients and their preparedness to go the extra mile to get the best possible results. Substantial time has been dedicated to getting seemingly minor debts waived, reflecting our lawyers' awareness of the huge impact such debts can have on our clients' lives, and the difference getting a debt waived can make.

How are we challenging and changing unfair laws and policies?

MOSAIC became aware that a number of asylum seekers were electing to go to local court to deal with infringements. Doing so, however, can have serious immigration and financial implications for them. Moreover, once a person has elected to go to court it is extremely difficult, if not impossible for them to 'opt out' again if they change their mind. Our research revealed almost no scope to amend the legislation. Instead, in collaboration with the Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS) we developed a factsheet aimed at caseworkers and other community organisations that work with asylum seekers about how to deal with fines.

The inaugural 'Bring Your Bills' (BYB) event was designed to improve clients' understanding particularly about mobile phone contracts, and provide them with

OUR CLIENTS

Kiruparajan, a Tamil migrant from Sri Lanka, arrived in Auburn, Sydney, two and a half years ago. As with any new migrant, adjusting to life in a new country, with a new language and new customs, proved challenging. But the process of getting a phone with which to call home should not have been one of those challenges.

Access to a phone is crucially important for new arrivals to Australia looking to stay in contact with loved ones back home or to seek employment in their new home. Unfortunately, some phone companies brazenly and blatantly exploit the linguistic and cultural challenges some new migrants face upon arrival.

When 'Kirupa', signed his two year contract, it was clear he could not understand the sales representative. He was not provided with a clear explanation about what his contract meant, or an interpreter to explain it to him.

He began using his phone, thinking his monthly bill was in fact a one-off, pre-paid expense. Seven months later, he found himself facing a phone bill of over \$2,500.

Unemployed and reliant upon a small amount of government financial support, the instalments were well beyond what he could afford. Not only was he stressed by this large debt, he was concerned about how it was going to affect his credit rating. Unfortunately his story is not unique. In fact, it is all too common.

Seeking help, he was put in touch with Justice Connect MOSAIC. With our partner pro bono lawyers, we worked with Kirupa to help him explain his situation to the telecommunications company. After much discussion, the company agreed for the debt to be fully waived in exchange for the return of the mobile phone. Kirupa was thrilled.

Empowered by the legal help he received, Kirupa now educates people in his community about the legal pitfalls facing new migrants and where to go when they get into trouble. He was extremely grateful to MOSAIC for resolving his problem, "MOSAIC's help meant I can still call my family. I am very lucky. If I am happy in my life now, it's because of Justice Connect."

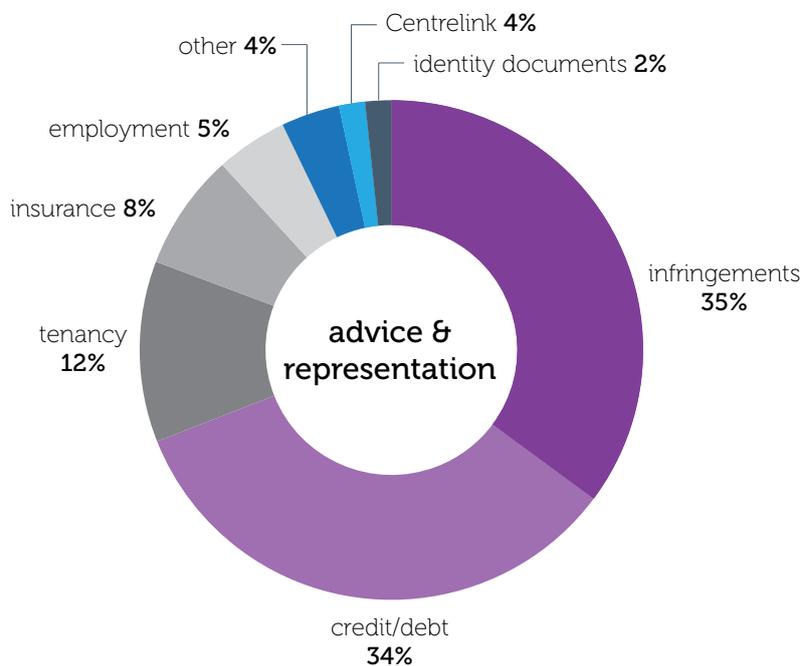
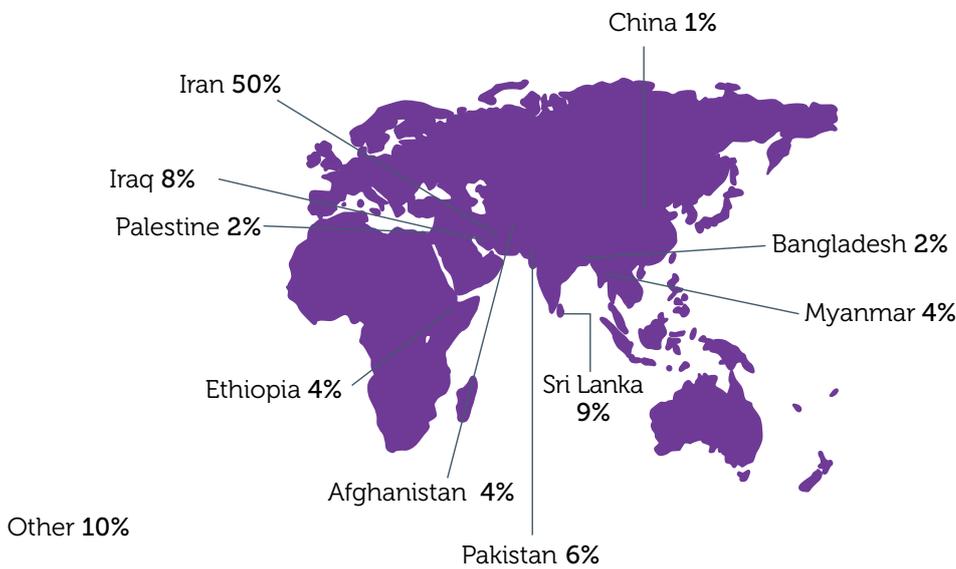


Kirupa

immediate assistance to resolve debts and other mobile phone bill disputes. 12 clients brought mobile phone and other bills along and received advice at individual advice sessions. The event also included community education sessions on various legal topics, which were attended by over 120 new migrants.

Following the 'Bring Your Bills' event, we produced a research report about common problems encountered by new migrants when entering into mobile phone contracts. The report includes recommendations for changes to the telecommunications industry practice, based on our clients' experiences.

The second part of our mobile phones project involved the development of information videos in a range of different community languages to distribute to community organisations for use as an educative tool. This aspect of the project involved an initial community education session, to increase awareness of consumer rights amongst new migrants, followed by a further session to train participants to create information materials (including videos) that are adapted for their communities. The final product – the information videos – will be publicised and distributed in late 2015.



144
casework files



87
lawyers engaged



93
people received non-legal help

NOT-FOR-PROFIT LAW

Not-for-profit Law is Justice Connect's specialist service for community organisations and charities.

This year, we facilitated free legal advice for more than 678 not-for-profit organisations and trained 2,209 in a variety of areas affecting not-for-profits. Our online Information Hub attracted over 130,000 unique visits in its first year and is expected to reach 180,000 in the next year, providing a uniquely scalable means of assisting the sector as well as an entry point to those who may need more specific legal help.

Our model remains very efficient at supporting community organisations. Our legal education work helps organisations to improve legal literacy, prevent problems and support good governance. For those needing one-on-one assistance, our skilled lawyers provide timely legal advice and guidance on straight-forward issues by phone, reserving the limited pro bono resources of our member law firms for complex matters requiring specialist in-depth assistance.

This year Not-for-profit Law has:

- Assisted 1,124 organisations with individual legal enquiries
- Provided legal advice for 678 organisations across Victoria and NSW
- Expanded our Information Hub to house 120 resources and attracted over 130,000 unique page views
- Delivered 54 training sessions to not-for-profits across Victoria and NSW
- Worked collaboratively and constructively to promote fair and appropriate laws and regulation for the not-for-profit sector

How are we delivering access to justice through pro bono?

With hundreds of thousands of small community groups in Australia, there is significant legal need within the sector, driving the strong demand for our legal educational and advisory services in Victoria and NSW this year.

We provided free legal advice and guidance to organisations across Victoria and NSW, responding to 1,124 enquiries and delivering over-the-phone legal advice or referral to a pro bono lawyer for over 60 per cent of these organisations. Demand grew particularly in NSW, reflecting our efforts to build sector awareness of and engagement with our service.

In its first year of operation, our online Information Hub attracted over 130,000 unique page views and was a finalist in the Australian and New Zealand Internet Awards. Leveraging significant pro bono support, we produced 39 new (or significantly updated) plain language resources covering federal, Victorian and NSW laws, and diversified the Hub's media by producing a suite of animated videos and piloting podcasts and instructional videos.

Building on the Hub's success to date and working with pro bono lawyers at member law firms across the country, the site will be further expanded to cover all states and territories in the coming year.

Our face-to-face training continued to inform and engage the community sector. In Victoria, our seminars hosted by pro bono lawyers from member firms were consistently well-attended, while we delivered 42 tailored training sessions across Victoria and NSW, often in regional and rural areas in partnership with sector peak bodies or local councils. We significantly expanded our online training this year by delivering free one-hour webinars on topics such as 'getting started', 'employee, contractor or volunteer?' and 'introduction to social enterprises', enabling us to reach new audiences with relative ease. Feedback has been very positive, with 100 per cent of survey respondents saying they

would attend another webinar run by Not-for-profit Law.

Organisations are increasingly exploring new ways of working together – from entering into MOUs or joint ventures through to undertaking mergers. While many groups are voluntarily engaging in these processes, organisations that deliver government-funded services are facing mounting pressure to consolidate. This trend means that more organisations are seeking practical, accessible legal help on the options and implications of these arrangements. We responded with a comprehensive program of support this year. Working with pro bono lawyers from Norton Rose Fulbright, we produced a suite of new resources and ran training in Melbourne and Sydney. Through this collaboration we were not only able to assist not-for-profits exploring collaborations and mergers, but also build our own lawyers' capacity to advise in this emerging – and increasing – area of unmet legal need.

How are we building lawyers' commitment to their pro bono responsibilities?

We continued to offer a range of skill development and knowledge exchange opportunities for pro bono lawyers this year. This work ensures that lawyers are not only committed to their pro bono responsibilities, but are consistently improving in their capacity to provide high quality, targeted advice to small not-for-profit clients.

A key achievement this year was the delivery of a postgraduate subject 'Charity and Not-for-Profit Law: Current Issues' as part of the University of Melbourne's Law Masters program. With lectures by Not-for-profit Law senior staff, as well as leading academics, regulators and practitioners, this course demonstrated our commitment to fostering charity law as a specialist area of expertise, which ultimately assists lawyers delivering pro bono advice to the sector.

We also conducted introductory sessions on charity and not-for-profit law for pro bono lawyers from member firms, aimed to attract new practitioners into

OUR CLIENTS

Gateways Support Services' festival gets the go-ahead

Gateways Support Services supports over 1,300 children and adults with autism and disabilities in Victoria's south-west. This specialist not-for-profit strives to develop the ability of children and adults with disabilities – and their families – to live enjoyable and meaningful lives.

As part of its work cultivating positive relationships within local communities, Gateways planned a festival to showcase films conveying the abilities, aspirations, and barriers affecting people with disabilities. The festival aimed to address misconceptions of people living with disabilities, and promote volunteerism and community support for disability services.

Gateways intended to invite people to submit films to be shown at the festival. But it hit a roadblock – Gateways needed permission to use submitted films for promotional purposes, and getting this right was a complex and daunting process. Drafting the legal documents required would also mean diverting the organisation's already limited resources from its core work supporting people with disabilities.

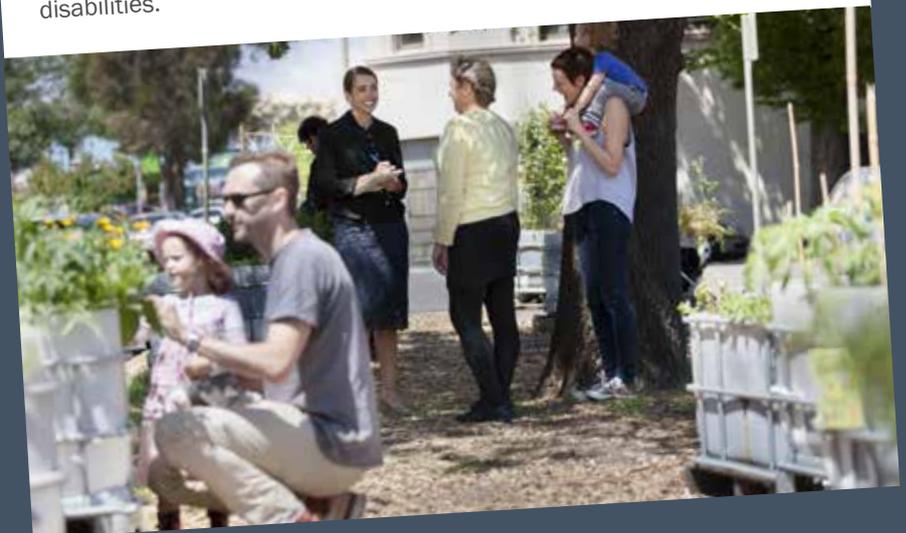
Unsure how to proceed, Gateways sought assistance from Justice Connect Not-for-profit Law, who referred the matter to Holding Redlich Lawyers.

Holding Redlich advised Gateways on the issues and helped draft the terms and conditions of the submissions. They made sure that Gateways had permission to use the submitted films, and in doing so, empowered the organisation to raise awareness of its cause, both at the festival and into the future.

Gateways were extremely happy with the assistance provided from Holding Redlich. Toni Wilson, Gateways' volunteer coordinator stated, "[as a] not-for-profit organisation the support of services like yours enables us to access a level of support we could not do otherwise."

Justice Connect Not-for-profit Law believes strongly in the public interest work of organisations like Gateways, and are committed to providing tailored, responsive and accessible legal help.

Pro bono legal assistance allows not-for-profit organisations to continue to focus on providing services to vulnerable people, with the peace of mind that their legal concerns are taken care of.



the area, and improve their awareness and skills to deal with common legal issues encountered by not-for-profits. This successful session will be repeated in Melbourne and Sydney next year. We also plan to roll out webinars to improve our capacity to train and support pro bono lawyers working on not-for-profit law issues across a far greater geographic area.

A focus for 2015-16 will be expanding the pool of pro bono lawyers working with us to support the not-for-profit sector. The expansion of our Information Hub nationally will provide scope for pro bono lawyers across the country to contribute, and we will increase engagement of in-house legal counsel at Australian companies through a dedicated project of capacity building and targeted matching of corporate lawyers with not-for-profits.

How are we challenging and changing unfair laws and policies?

This year we continued our work supporting the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) through formal submissions and meetings. Despite Federal Government statements since the 2013 election indicating its desire to abolish the ACNC, it has been retained.

Not-for-profit Law has long been active in advocating for a sensible and fair tax system for the sector. Our submission to the Department of Treasury's 'Re:think' Tax Discussion Paper focussed on undue complexity and duplication in the tax framework for smaller charitable organisations, while we argued to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Register of Environmental Organisations that tax legislation should be amended to align with what is already in place for environmental charities under the ACNC regulatory framework.

A feature of our policy work this year was our collaboration with peak bodies to assist the sector to understand and negotiate new government contracts. With pro bono assistance from TressCox, we produced a factsheet which was distributed nationally to help organisations funded by the Department of Social Services understand their new service agreement, and also supported Victorian sector representatives to negotiate changes to the Department of Health and Human Services' standard service agreement, which will now extend to all not-for-profits receiving Victorian Government funding.



678
advices given



2,209 people
trained



318 lawyers
engaged



130,504
visits to the
Information
Hub

JUSTICE CONNECT IN ACTION:

three perspectives on homelessness prevention

At Justice Connect we are proud of our innovative work partnering with our member organisations, and acknowledging that providing access to justice is more than simply access to a lawyer.

In Kelly's story, a client, a pro bono lawyer and a social worker from Justice Connect's Women's Homelessness Prevention Project (WHPP) share their unique perspectives on the links between family violence and homelessness. Their stories highlight the crucial role that legal representation combined with social work support can play in helping survivors of violence move ahead with their lives.



The Client – Kelly*

“It’s unfair to think that I would be the one to end up with a bad rental history because of things he did.”

Kelly is a 21 year old single mum. In her youth, she left a violent and abusive family home, spending several years couch-surfing with friends. During this time she met the man who would become the father of her daughter, and shortly after her birth, moved into her first private rental with him.



My greatest fear was for my daughter being hurt. It wasn't even about her father anymore, I just knew with the way things were going that we had to leave



Both of us are a lot happier. Just spending time with her everyday – it's a lot happier now

Things quickly began to unravel due to Kelly's partner's substance abuse issues. Kelly was subjected to serious and persistent drug-fuelled violence, which also involved damage to the property. The home was no longer a safe environment for her or her infant daughter.

After a few months of this, Kelly was forced to flee to her family home, yet continued to pay rent. With her name on the lease, Kelly feared she'd incur a bad reference for future rentals. Paying rent on a home she didn't live in soon became unaffordable, and the real estate agent commenced legal proceedings to evict her and claim over \$6,000 in outstanding rent and damage. Without support, and experiencing post-natal depression, this was understandably scary for Kelly. She hadn't caused the damage, but knew her ex-partner would not take responsibility.

Kelly was referred to Homeless Law, and through the WHPP, met with pro bono lawyers from Herbert Smith Freehills and the WHPP social worker.

At VCAT, the lawyers successfully argued that responsibility for the damage and

unpaid rent should be appropriately apportioned between Kelly and her ex-partner, and presented evidence about the violent relationship. Ultimately, this led to Kelly being held liable for only \$900 of the original claim.

With the help of her lawyers and social worker, Kelly then reached an agreement to gradually repay the \$900 in exchange for a positive rental reference, boosting her chance of private rental in future.

The WHPP's social worker also arranged for Kelly to meet with a youth support service, which has led to new, stable housing with a range of supports, including counselling for family violence and a new computer to assist her in her return to university.

Kelly is relieved with this outcome and is now saving money to re-enter the private rental market as a sole tenant, and building a new life with her daughter.

* Client's name changed.



The lawyer – Isabelle

“It’s really empowering for me as a lawyer to know that I have had a direct impact on someone’s life, in what can be a really scary situation.”

For pro bono lawyers like Herbert Smith Freehills’ Isabelle, the chance to help people facing disadvantage is a great opportunity to give back to the community. For Isabelle, Kelly’s story presented a chance to make a difference for someone who had faced family violence.

After taking detailed instructions at the initial client interview, Isabelle and her team quickly set to work on Kelly’s matter in the lead-up to the VCAT hearing.

It quickly became apparent that Kelly was being held responsible for damage caused by her violent ex-partner, and that she would not be able to afford the amount claimed.

During negotiations, Isabelle explained to the real estate agent that there was a legal basis for dividing the compensation claim up between Kelly and her ex-partner. Isabelle noticed that leading up to the hearing, the agent’s attitude became more sympathetic as she learned about Kelly’s background and circumstances.

After the VCAT process ended with Kelly’s liability reduced by thousands of dollars, Isabelle commented that: “My impression was that if we had not had helped Kelly, she would have been willing to pay all the money that was being claimed just to get this sorted out for her and her child.”

Instead, through legal representation Kelly’s debt was significantly reduced, and she was able to enter a payment plan with the real estate agent to obtain a positive rental reference.

For Isabelle, helping Kelly to achieve this outcome is a perfect example of why she does pro bono work with Justice Connect Homeless Law.



I get to assist people in the community who are vulnerable and unaware of their legal rights and it’s really empowering for me as a lawyer to know that I have had a direct impact on someone’s life, in what can be a really scary situation

The social worker – Antoinette

“The clients really feel that they have an expert team, and one that is cohesive and working together for the best outcome. The WHPP is amazing, it’s the most effective I have ever felt as a worker.”

Kelly’s story is similar to many of Antoinette’s clients, particularly in relation to the disruptive effect of family violence. Kelly was first exposed to family violence in childhood, fleeing home to escape and spending a few years couch-surfing, never with a stable home.

As is far too common, falling pregnant led to further family violence. As this violence escalated, Kelly became fearful she’d lose her child. She was forced to return to the family home she had initially run from.

Kelly knew she couldn’t stay long term and was anxious to avoid a bad tenancy history as a result of rent owing and damage at the other property. It was this risk to her ability to get housing on her own that prompted Kelly to reach out for assistance from Homeless Law.

Antoinette could see immediately that there was a range of non-legal issues Kelly needed assistance with. A warm referral to a youth-specific service that could provide intensive casework support proved particularly helpful, with Kelly being assigned a youth support worker, leading to transitional housing and counselling to assist with the effects of the violence she’d endured.

As legal assistance through the WHPP continued, Antoinette stayed in touch with Kelly to provide her ongoing emotional support. After the VCAT finding saved Kelly thousands of dollars, Antoinette remained in touch with Kelly and learned that the new stable housing had greatly improved her child’s sleeping and temperament. Kelly’s youth worker had also arranged a computer for her, as she would soon be returning to study.



Twice family violence has derailed life for Kelly, and both times it put her into housing crisis.



Justice Connect Board members

The passionate commitment of our staff is one of the keys to our success.

Leadership, sustainability and effectiveness are the principles that guide our individual and collective behaviour.

We hold ourselves to the highest standards of professional practice, driven by practical outcomes for our clients. We recognise our part in a network of people and organisations in the legal assistance sector. We seek to be generous in collaboration, sharing what we know and engaging with all our stakeholders and partners.

These ways of working feed into a key defining commitment – to respond creatively to the opportunities that present themselves, in line with our strategy. This inspires us to develop new responses to unmet legal need utilising pro bono lawyers and to continually improve what we are already doing.

However we know that just being professional does not necessarily deliver effective solutions. And that passionate commitment must be sustainable. Likewise, that a creative response will not have the desired effect if it doesn't lead others to get involved.

Staff

A list of our current staff can be found at justiceconnect.org.au/who-we-are/our-staff. At the end of the financial year, we had 46 staff (38.4 full time equivalent positions) in two offices in Melbourne and Sydney.



Patrons

We were delighted to have the continued support of Julian Burnside AO QC and Professor Gillian Triggs, our inaugural patrons.



Secondnees

In 2014/15 we received invaluable support from firms that are recognised in the Acknowledgements section. The secondment program greatly assists Justice Connect and provides a valuable experience to participating firms and practitioners.

Volunteers

The contribution made by volunteers is crucial to the operation of Justice Connect. We are assisted by a diversity of professional volunteers as well as students from university law schools, fellows sponsored by Justice Connect member firms and law graduates in Melbourne and Sydney who are undertaking their practical legal training. We extend our thanks to all of the talented and committed volunteers who made such a difference to our effectiveness this year.

Board

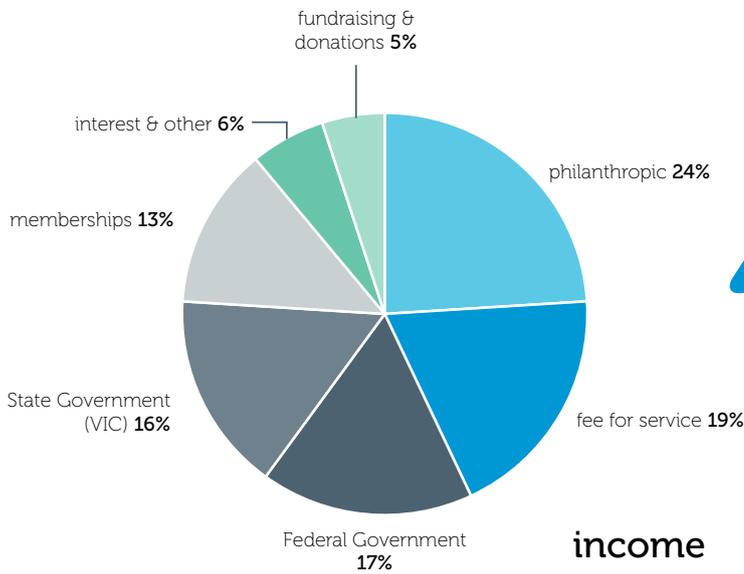
We are governed by an independent, skills based volunteer board whose commitment to the organisation is crucial to our success.

The purpose of the Board is to promote and protect the interests and objectives of Justice Connect. In carrying out their responsibilities and exercising their powers, Board Members ensure they act honestly, fairly and diligently, in accordance with the law in serving the interests of Justice Connect and, where appropriate, the reasonable expectations of Justice Connect's stakeholders.

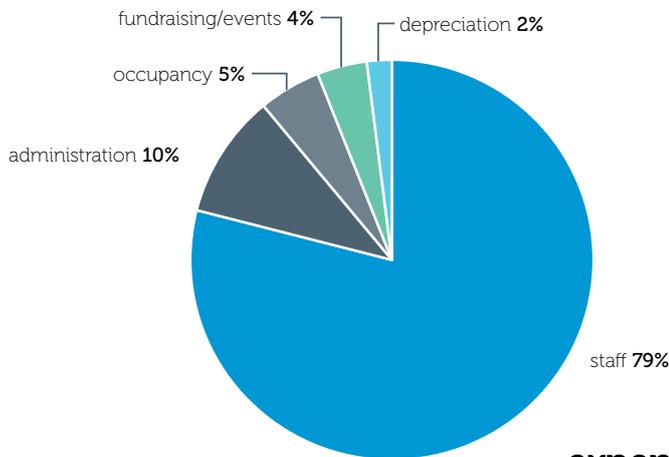
The key responsibilities of the Board are:

- » Strategy
- » Accountability
- » Risk Management
- » Compliance

OUR ORGANISATION



income



expenditure



83%
Melbourne



17%
Sydney



100% female
senior leadership team

Board members were active in four sub-committees in 2014/15 - the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee, the Nominations Committee, and the Victorian and NSW State Committees.

Our Directors for 2014/15 were:

- » Mitzi Gilligan: Chair
- » Gordon Renouf: Deputy Chair
- » Alexandra Rose
- » Carmel Mulhern
- » Geoff Rush:
- » Nicky Friedman
- » Simon Lewis
- » Richard Wilson
- » Marcellina Wolfgramm: Australian Institute of Company Directors Observership Program

Our Finances

Our surplus for the 2014/15 financial year was \$67,579 representing 1% of our annual turnover. We have continued to diversify our funding sources, and invested in systems and facilities to further support our team to deliver our programs and services.

In 2014/15 we received funding from the Victorian state and federal governments, memberships, philanthropic trusts and foundations, corporates, fee for services we provided and fundraising events. We also received a range of very generous in-kind support from our members which assist in making our work possible including secondment of staff, volunteer engagement and donation of resources and facilities.

Governance

On 1 July 2013 Justice Connect became a company limited by guarantee. We are a public benevolent institution, endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office as a deductible gift recipient organisation. Our accounts are independently audited. A copy of our Constitution and Strategy is available at justiceconnect.org.au/who-we-are/our-story

A copy of our audited, annual financial report can be found at justiceconnect.org.au/who-we-are/annual-reports



46 employees

38.4 EFT

0.83 avg. EFT

78% female / 22% male

72% permanent / 28% fixed term

19% turnover

19 external appointments

5 internal promotions

10.4 years period of longest service

2.6 years avg. period of service





THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Justice Connect is a not-for-profit organisation and a registered charity, reliant on our members, partners and philanthropic donors to provide vital funds, as well as the essential pro bono support that is the backbone of our work

We occupy a unique position between the private, community and government sectors and place great importance on these relationships.

Our capacity to pursue and achieve public interest goals derives from the culture and community of goodwill that we have fostered over many years with lawyers, governments, professional legal associations, philanthropic partners and community groups.

We would like to recognise the support and contribution of the following people and organisations:

Legal Sector Partners

Law Institute of Victoria
Legal Services Board
Grants Program
Victoria Legal Aid
Victorian Bar

Members

Advocacy & Rights
Centre Ltd
Allens
Altmann Legal
Arnold Bloch Leibler
Arnold Dallas McPherson
Australian Catholic
University
Baker & McKenzie
Banki Haddock Fiora
Carroll & O'Dea
Clayton Utz
Clifford Chance
Colin Biggers & Paisley
Corrs Chambers
Westgarth
The Office of David Grace
QC
Dibbs Barker
DLA Piper Australia
Doogue O'Brien George
Federation of Community
Legal Centres (Vic)
Fragomen
Francis Abourizk
Lightowers
Gilbert + Tobin
Graham Jones Lawyers
Hall & Wilcox

Harwood Andrews Pty Ltd
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Hive Legal
Holding Redlich
HWL Ebsworth Lawyers
Inner Melbourne
Community Legal
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King & Wood Mallesons
Lander & Rogers
LaTrobe University
Legal Aid NSW
Lewis Holdway Lawyer
McCullough Robertson
Lawyers
Maddocks
Maurice Blackburn
Lawyers
Minter Ellison
Monash University
Nicholes Family Lawyers
Norton Rose
Public Interest Advocacy
Centre (PIAC)
Rigby Cooke Lawyers
Robinson Gill
Russell Kennedy
Shine Lawyers
Sixth Floor St James Hall
Sparke Helmore
Swaab Attorneys
Tenth Floor Chambers

Transport Accident
Commission
TressCox
University of Melbourne
UTS Faculty of Law
Webb Henderson
Westpac
William Roberts Lawyers
Women's Legal Service
Woolf Associates
Wotton & Kearney

Government & Community Partners

Australian Government
Attorney-General's
Department
ACCAN
City of Melbourne
Federal Court -
Melbourne & Sydney
Melbourne Magistrates
Court
Seniors Rights Victoria
Victoria Law Foundation
Victorian Government

Philanthropic Partners

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The Ian Potter
Foundation
Lord Mayor's Charitable
Foundation
The Myer Foundation

The Marian and E.H.
Flack Trust
Perpetual Trustees
Phyllis Connor Memorial
Innovation Fund,
managed by Equity
Trustees and Mr Norman
Bourke
Portland House
Foundation
Telematics Trust
The Trust Company, a
part of Perpetual, as
Trustee for the Fred P.
Archer Charitable Trust
Victorian Legal Services
Board and Commissioner
Vincent Fairfax Family
Foundation
William Buckland
Foundation

Individual Donors

We sincerely thank the many valued individual donors who generously supported our work, including through our annual fundraising events, the Walks for Justice and Human Rights Law Dinners.

Site Hosts and In Kind Supporters

Auburn City Council
Australian Government
Solicitor
Australian Red Cross
Central City Community
Health Service
City of Melbourne



City of Sydney
cohealth
Consumer Action Law Centre
Council on the Ageing
Federation of Community Legal Centres Victoria
Federal Circuit Court of Australia
Federal Court of Australia, Sydney and Melbourne Registries
Housing for the Aged Action Group
Launch Housing and REA Group
Melbourne City Mission
MetroAssist
Navitas
Office of the Public Advocate
QPILCH
RACS
Redfern Legal Centre
Salvation Army in Geelong
Street Smart
Swinburne University

Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
Victorian Government, Department of Justice and Regulation

NSW State Committee members

Michelle Hannon (Gilbert + Tobin)
Robyn Ayres (Arts Law Centre)
Ed Santow (Public Interest Advocacy Centre)
Meghan Carruthers (HWL Ebsworth)
Jane Cipants (NSW Legal Aid)
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